

Decision _____

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

William Leach,

Complainant,

vs.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company,

Defendant.

(U 39 E)

(ECP)

Case 03-05-010
(Filed May 6, 2003)

OPINION DENYING REQUEST FOR RELIEF

Summary

William Leach (Complainant) seeks an order from the Commission requiring Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) to share the cost of relocating its electric service line and meter serving the water pump on his property. Complainant argues that PG&E should share the cost because relocating the meter would remove a safety hazard for PG&E's meter reader.

PG&E denies that the present location of the meter creates an unsafe condition for its meter reader.

The complaint is denied because the relocation is not required to correct an unsafe condition for PG&E's meter reader. Therefore, Complainant must bear the entire cost of the relocation pursuant to PG&E Tariff Rule 16.F.2.b., if he chooses to proceed with the project.

This proceeding is closed.

Procedural Summary

An evidentiary hearing was held on June 4, 2003 in Watsonville. Testimony was provided by Complainant on his own behalf, and by Sue Eagen, PG&E's electric estimator and by Jeanne Williams, PG&E's meter reading supervisor for the area.

Background

The electric meter serving Complainant's water pump is fixed to a pole located in a pasture which is part of Complainant's property. Complainant installed a new pole in the yard of his house and he wants PG&E to relocate its meter and service line to the new pole so that he can remove the existing pole from his pasture. PG&E provided "ball-park" estimates of \$1,000 and \$3,000, respectively, for two service line routings being considered by Complainant. PG&E says it will provide a firm estimate after Complainant has paid a \$500 engineering deposit required to develop the specific cost of the project. According to PG&E, there are significant costs involved in preparing a site specific engineering estimate, and the deposit would be applied to the total cost of the project contract, or used to offset any engineering costs incurred by PG&E if Complainant were to cancel the job.

Complainant and PG&E personnel have had several meetings and resolved all issues except who should pay for the relocation of the service line and meter.

Positions of Parties

Complainant argues that PG&E should share the cost equally with him for two reasons. Complainant contends that based on his experience as a tow truck owner and operator, and his involvement with clean-up of highway accidents, he

believes that the practice of PG&E's meter reader of stopping on the highway and getting-out of her truck to read his pump meter, is dangerous. He contends that relocating the meter to the new pole he installed would correct this hazardous situation for PG&E's meter reader. Complainant also acknowledges that he wants the existing meter pole removed to enable him to make better use of his pasture for keeping cattle and growing vegetables.

PG&E denies that the present location of the pump meter creates unsafe conditions for its meter reader. PG&E witness Williams testified that the meter reader must enter the Complainant's driveway to read his house meter, and she can then easily walk to the pump meter through a gate on the property. For convenience, and because in the past Complainant told the meter reader he did not want her to drive on to his property, she began to read the pump meter from the road in front of his property. According to Witness Williams, Lewis Road, where Complainant's property is situated, is a two-lane county road with high visibility, and at no time does the meter reader exit her vehicle while it is on the roadway. If there is no traffic behind her, she stops directly opposite the meter for approximately five seconds to read the meter through a scope. If this is not feasible due to traffic conditions or for any other reason, the meter reader will drive into Complainant's driveway and walk to the meter. Also, according to witness Williams, another alternative is to read the pump meter on the meter reader's return trip on Lewis Road after she reads a neighbor's meter across the street. However, according to witness Williams, this alternative has not been necessary since the Complainant expressed his concern for the meter reader's safety and gave permission for her to drive on to his property.

Discussion

The evidence does not support Complainant's argument that relocation of the meter is required to eliminate a hazardous situation for PG&E's meter reader. As PG&E witness Williams testified, the meter reader can now enter Complainant's driveway to read the house meter and the pump meter. We conclude that Complainant is requesting a meter and service line relocation solely for his benefit. Therefore, there is no basis to relieve Complainant of his obligation under Tariff Rule 16.F.2.b to pay all the costs associated with the relocation. Accordingly, the complaint should be denied.

Assignment of Proceeding

Loretta M. Lynch is the Assigned Commissioner and Bertram D. Patrick is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

O R D E R**IT IS ORDERED** that:

1. The relief requested is denied.
2. This proceeding is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated _____, at San Francisco, California.